

Chocolate Cake; a slice of life

Laura Mastrosimone
Staff Writer

Chocolate Cake, one of this week's presentations by the Drew University Dramatic Society, was written by Mary Gallagher and directed by senior Elizabeth Timperman. The two-person cast stars sophomores Susan Saunders (Dehlia) and Shannon Wandell (Annmarie), both newcomers to the Drew stage.

While on the surface the play revolves around eating disorders, the themes raised by this production go much deeper. It explores the reasons behind problems with food; the sense of loneliness, inadequacy, and the need to fill a void.

Due to Gallagher's ingenuity, the audience is not spoon fed conclusions about the characters. They perceive the emotional struggles of Annmarie and Dehlia through facial expressions, vocal inflection, and unsaid cravings and anxieties.

The action begins as the characters sit in their rooms of a small-town hotel. They have gathered for a conference on women's careers. Annmarie sits in her bed watching TV in robe and slippers, making her "small-town girl" characteristics instantly obvious when juxtaposed against Dehlia with her exercise bike, leather boots, and mink coat.

In the background, commercials for numerous diet plans intermittently contrast against ads for rich, enticing foods. Although the characters hail from two different worlds, the use of commercials enables the audience to see how they unite in the struggle against society's perceptions of weight and eating behavior.

Eventually, Dehlia decides to pay a visit to Annmarie, and the two end up having an intimate conversation. Through this interchange, the audience discovers both women suffer from low self-esteem. They feel stagnant in their lives and marriages. Their worlds may be different, but they share a common bond when it comes to food. Both women use food to fill the emotional void in their lives. As Dehlia says, "Food has always been my drug... it is the only thing I can count on."

Although they have not known each other long, the characters continue to open up to one another. They are relieved to finally talk to someone who understands their situation. As Annmarie and Dehlia work at "being themselves" and accepting food addiction as a part of their identity, questions arise as to what the future may hold. Can they continue to live this way? In an interesting



Shannon Wandell and Susan Saunders swap edible stories and deep, dark secrets. Photo by Keith Bronsdon

conclusion, Annmarie makes a pivotal choice about where her life is headed.

Chocolate Cake brings to its audience a sense of closeness. The play's interesting mix of humor and serious issues draw the spectator in. As Dehlia and Annmarie reveal their need for intimacy and understanding from one another, audience members feel more like friends to these women, rather than observers. Both actresses give impressive performances, as they must project both the outer aspects of their characters as well as the emotional turmoil that lies within.

The themes of this play do not associate solely with food addiction; they present a clear picture of the pressure society places upon people, particularly women, to live up to a certain standard. As Timperman stated, "Everyone has an eating disorder in some degree," due to society's strict rules as to what is physically acceptable.

This production brings home the importance of a positive self-image; emotional stability can only be attained when an individual learns to accept and love the person who they happen to be. Yet, as demonstrated in this play, this is one of the hardest lessons in life to learn.

Chocolate Cake has something that everyone can relate to. We all battle with food at some point; we all struggle to achieve an unattainable standard, and we all strive to gain self-acceptance.

Not only worthwhile because it's entertaining, *Chocolate Cake* teaches us all a little something about ourselves.

TOP 10 LIST

Top Ten Organs:

10. Pyloric caecum
9. Wurlitzer
8. Pancreas
7. The one in the Sistine Chapel
6. Portland
5. Really huge pumpkins
4. Ronald Reagan's colon
3. Where burps come from
2. Kean's olfactory bulbs
1. The brain of Don Ameche

by The Acorn Staff

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WMNJ 88.9 FM

These are the most requested bands on Drew's student operated radio station. Neato, ain't it?

1. R.E.M.
2. Billy Joel
3. Dramarama
4. Nirvana
5. Living Colour
6. Crash Test Dummies
7. Red Hot Chili Peppers
8. Fishbone
9. Siouxsie & the Banshees
10. Replacements

Top Ten is determined on a one vote per band per show basis influenced by your requests. Call WMNJ at x5021 to make requests.

Distractions

Galleries

Art Show: "The Jewels in the Lotus: Art and Culture of Tibet."
12:30 p.m.-4 p.m. Korn Gallery
Through Nov. 9

Theatre

The Respectful Prostitute
by Jean-Paul Sartre
directed by Julio Irizarry
Chocolate Cake
by Mary Gallagher
directed by Elizabeth Timperman
Commons Theatre
Nov. 1-2, 8 p.m.

Movies

Silence of the Lambs
L.C. 28 Nov. 1, 6 & 8 p.m.
U.C. 107 Nov. 2-3, 6 & 8 p.m.

Now at Headquarters 10 AMC:

Little Man Tate
Other People's Money
Billy Bathgate
Curly Sue
People Under The Stairs
The Fisher King
Year of the Gun
Frankie and Johnny
The Butcher's Wife
Ricochet

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The Other End

Thurs. 8 p.m.-1 a.m.
Rapid Transit (with Andy Durkin)
Neil McLellan & Matt Mueller:
Acoustic set
Fri. 9 p.m.-2 a.m.
Sonido with Nick Sheuble:
Afro-Cuban jazz
Sat. 9 p.m.-2 a.m.
Three bands:
Crack Babies
Shrink Trip
Skeevy Jeets
Sun. 8 p.m.-1 a.m.
Women's Concerns Cabaret

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